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THE  
DRAGON FORM;

OR,  
THE BINDING OF SATAN AND THE  
IMAGE OF GOD.

BY  
WILLIAM SHARPE, M.D.,

*Author of "Humanity and the Man" and "Humanity  
and the Serpent," &c.*

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## SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY.—INTRODUCTORY.

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The dragon ever more with rage inflamed  
At thought of beauty, innocence or love ;  
But now with sevenfold fury filled at sight  
Surpassing aught by him aforetime seen  
Or hitherto of loveliness conceived,  
His swollen crest with dreadful hiss upreared  
And tortuous, rolled his monstrous length in heaps.

—*Humanity and the Man.*

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The basis of these essays, reprinted from “*Light*,” on what may be called “Scientific” Theology, is contained in the first chapters of Genesis. We have there represented to us, Man fashioned in the Image of God, male and female. This crowning form of a dually expressed individuality is placed in direct contrast to that of the serpent, the embodied expression of personified evil. And the mystical “revelation” so briefly yet profoundly set forth at the outset is continued throughout the whole of Sacred Scripture. The malignant nature and correspondingly evil aspect of the “doomed” dragon on the one hand and the mystery of “God-likeness,” the fulness of the stature of Christ, on the other, are themes that are never lost sight of. And the intimation clearly conveyed is—that man, as a free-will agent, can and does fashion himself into the one likeness or the other. This prospective ascent and descent to the extremes of either form I have already endeavoured to point out in my poem, *Humanity and the Man*. In it man, to a certain extent unmated, is represented as wandering alone until (in chapter vi.) he recognises his companion and helpmeet, redeemed and perfected woman, drawn at length after centuries from the

long seclusion to which she had been consigned, degraded in fact to a chattel, instead of being recognised as the completing half of the dual Image of God.

To the *modus operandi* of the transition to either state I have referred more particularly in my little work, *Humanity and the Serpent of Genesis*, in which I have tried to compress much matter in small compass—even our growth into God-likeness; for this at bottom is the “hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory”—the “mystery” of all mysteries, man redeemed from the dominion of evil, fashioned and perfected in the radiant beauty of the Divine Image.

## THE DRAGON FORM ;

OR,

## THE BINDING OF SATAN.

So they, till of the human shape deprived  
 By Heaven's decree, are ministers of death :  
 Less potent when to serpent forms constrained—  
 To serpent forms wherein their deadly hate  
 Is still expressed but not their fatal power.  
 So Heaven wills, for in the dragon shape  
 The lowest stage of evil is portrayed.  
 The stage to which from higher grades it fell :  
 The change within itself of nature wrought.  
 Its deadly hate, deceit and cunning still  
 Expressed in full, but unto weakness joined ;  
 For now, of outward limbs deprived and shorn,  
 It is perforce unto the earth confined—  
 There doomed to crawl ; its sole remaining power  
 In sinuous fold or poison fang retained.

—*Humanity and the Man.*

In the crude representations of the mediæval monster with claws and tail was an underlying truth of deep import : and that was—let the devil disguise as he would, he was still liable to detection from deformed ugliness of person which could not

be concealed. In this there was safety : for being detected he could be avoided. But ancient report tells that this Satan was once among the "bright ones" ; but turning to evil courses he fell away from the Divine image, the ideal standard of personal beauty and human perfection.

Now this falling away brings us to the question of "law" as the cause of the same. And this "law," as it affects humanity, may be denominated the law of degradation and elevation, of retrogression and progression, working through what Swedenborg rightly termed "correspondences" ; that is, dominant ideas, "ruling loves," have their own proper forms : and these forms they must put on, and none other, when they express themselves either in the physical or spiritual world ; for the form is the very idea itself made manifest. Hence, from the careful consideration of many facts bearing on the subject, is established the existence of a universal law, which governs all final expression or embodiment of intelligent being. On the one hand it is the source of strength and beauty, and on the other weakness and deformity as exhibited in both worlds.

Now these transcendent truths are very forcibly set forth in the great allegory of the "temptation" in Genesis. Concerning the tempter, it is stated : "Since," or because, "thou hast done this thing, upon thy belly thou shalt go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." Now this pronouncement would have little meaning if the tempter, represented as the serpent, had already crawled upon the ground ; but the statement clearly shows he did not. Therefore, it must be conceded, if the judgment be accomplished by law, that it has been brought about by the act of deception, taking on its own proper form of outward expression through the law of correspondence.

And the serpent form has long been recognised as the pronounced embodiment of malignant deception and evil temptation ; for even in the pictorial imagery of dreams and visions, it stands for both. Hence we have prominently set forth in the Bible this revelation of deepest import, a self-wrought and remedial judgment of which science now establishes the fact.\*

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\* See *Humanity and the Serpent*.

But though there be many grades of evil on the downward track, the serpent form embodies the lowest possible. Expressing as it does the most deadly of vices, namely, malignant deception, it is, for wise ends, made the weakest as well as the most detested of all vertebrate animal forms. Evil under this type is deprived even of its mediæval claws ; and Satan is here so plainly exhibited that all avoid him with abhorrence, and the slow, crawling dragon has no power to overtake or capture those who, seeing him, clear out of his way.

This is the "binding of hand and foot," the lopping off of limbs with, in the lowest, the total obliteration of the Divine image. Milton in the following lines has given us the exact manner of this "binding," though the learned world up to the present has never comprehended their force or meaning. The solemn lesson they ought to convey to man collectively and individually has hitherto hardly been thought of.

His arms clung to his ribs ; his legs entwining  
Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,  
A monstrous serpent, on his belly prone,  
Reluctant, but in vain, a greater Power  
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,  
According to his doom. He would have spoke,  
But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue  
To forked tongue, for now were all transformed.

Now, on the other hand, the unbinding or redemption of mankind from the thralldom of evil is wrought out by love working through the same law of correspondences ; for the seed of the woman, having long since bruised the serpent's head, the gentle and loving qualities of the "Lamb" have taken on their Divine expression, and have replaced, and are continually replacing those of the evil beast ; while the head of the serpent, crushed inwardly, will never express outwardly. But instead thereof, at the opposite extreme, will appear the conquerors, angels in the image of God, male and female, their perfect freedom and unfettered liberty to range the universe appropriately symbolised by wings in the creations of art and poetry.

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## THE IMAGE OF GOD.

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But on the middle and the upper slopes  
 No cloud remained, but still the light increased,  
 Till round the top a dazzling radiance shone.  
 Yet none within the upper zone might come  
 Or rest upon the top save one that seemed  
 Greater than human, yet of human mould.

\* \* \* \* \*

In whom the Image of the Deity,  
 On man conferred, is in its highest evolved ;  
 As needs it should, ere man perfection gained.

—*Humanity and the Man.*

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What is the meaning of this ancient yet persistent idea, the “Image of God”? To most people it is a phrase, heard of at times. To a few only is it among the greatest of Scripture revelations, and indeed of all revelations whatever, for the truths contained in it are among the most profound and important of those that affect humanity. And the underlying basic substance, when once assimilated by the intellect, constitutes a mental edifice that, like a pyramid, standing on earth, reaches Heaven. But all, of whatever status, are agreed that a perfected humanity, whether in the spiritual or physical worlds, is the realisation of the image.

But the question arises—is this ideal perfection a thing of the future, and is humanity, as we find it, only a prophecy of the same? It is at once a prophecy and a fulfilment; for the wise king said there was “nothing new under the sun”: that which was is that which is and that which shall be. The Divine Image is no new thought, now about to be realised after the lapse of an eternity. It has, we must think, been manifested and re-manifested from of old—an eternal serial involution of spirit into expression going on in all worlds, spiritual and



physical, as the individuations of the Infinite Duality—the Father-Mother. In the physical is the ever new and fresh expression of individuality necessary to, and in consonance with, outward nature, through which they are perfected, educated in time, as it were, by the accumulated experience there gained during the six mystic days of labour. In the spiritual, the great periods of fruition are entered upon; the felicity, symbolised under various types, culminating in the “Sabbath of rest.” Then again is the reversion; \* for there is nothing new in eternity, and nothing unnecessary; for the evils and seeming imperfections due to the limitations of the physical are needed for trial; for the gaining of experience in the conquering of the material, by the withdrawing of it into the greater realities and intensity of spiritual existence. There must be a lowest if we would have a highest; we must descend to ascend.

But this “image,” whether ideal and perfect or blurred, as in the present aspects of humanity, does not exist apart; but being comprehended in, must also be visibly, organically, or atomically connected with the Infinite. And this connection is effected under the limitations of personal form as the “Word,” Logos, El Shaddai, and the Adonai, the “Lord high and lifted up” of Hebrew and other seers, ancient and modern. This the Adonai is the great original after which humanity is modelled; and in the fulness of the beauty and perfection so revealed is the union and consummation of the physical and the spiritual. Hence man is said to be a microcosm of the universe.

Now some confusion of thought exists as to the form-aspect of this perfected Image of God. Some, basing their arguments on the rib said to be taken from the side of man, conclude that the imagery was meant to convey the idea that the form instead of being dual, male and female, was originally that of a single bi-sexual, androgynous personage. But the rib in the great mystic narrative is clearly intended to symbolise the nearness and essential oneness of conjugal union and gives no support to the androgynous theory, which, apart from the somewhat

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\* See “Nirvana,” “*Light*,” May 9th, 1891.



repellent idea of a being complete in itself, shrouded in selfish isolation, would involve the loss of one or both ideal forms of beauty ; of both by the equal blending of the two into one complex individual, lacking as may be easily imagined, the perfection of either original ; of either form singly, by the absorption or comprehension of one by the other to the marring of that other also ; for the perfection of the one form is only completed in the perfection of the other, owing to each in their proportions being the exact complement of the other. As music results from the rhythmic arrangement of contrasted notes in the scale of sound—for without contrast there is no beauty of expression—so as regards man visual harmony is produced by the artistic grouping of contrasted curves in the lines of contour of the complemental forms. And this harmony by contrast is equally dependent on both, being, as it were, reflected from one to the other ; and is marred in proportion as either departs from their own ideal standard, by the woman approaching the masculine contour or the man the feminine. Hence each is admired of each as the more perfect and beautiful of the two. To use the pregnant words of Milton—Adam worships “divine, accomplished Eve,” and Eve, Adam. But the typical Adam and Eve though two in form are essentially one in union ; in whose mutual love, the great bard intuitively says, “All things pleased, were fair, yet they themselves the crown of all and fairest of the whole !”—

“Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
Godlike, erect, in native honour clad,  
In naked majesty seemed lords of all,  
And worthy seemed ; for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shone.”

These facts are so self-evident that they require no further demonstration ; for who, even among us, would willingly give up the approximate creations of art on either side, how much less give up the realities that no art can ever approach ?

This then is the Image of God, for ever dual in expression ; “the man,” according to Paul, “not being without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord.” And the realising of the same in its ideal perfection is the great work of

the “six days” or periods. During these days the evil ideas that have temporarily gained expression, blurring and obliterating the Divine similitude, and marring the worlds, physical and spiritual, by evil embodiment, have to be suppressed and withdrawn. Then, the head of the serpent crushed, evil expression will cease and disappear, even from outward nature. “All things” as declared, “will be made new,” and everywhere will be reflected the image of the Divine Original—in the verdure of the forest; in the “lilies of the field”; in insect life; in gentle bird and beast; in the beauty of all expression, culminating in redeemed and perfected humanity.





